United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1465
26 August 1993

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General outlines to Fifth Committee measures to cut Secretariat expenses, including reducing temporary staff for General Assembly and limiting number and scheduling of meetings; number of consultants and official travel to be cut.

+ Special Envoy Dante Caputo hails Haitian Parliament's ratification of Robert Malval as new Prime Minister of Haiti; Secretary-General to recommend that Security Council suspend sanctions against that country.

+ Secretary-General meets with Libyan envoy to discuss implementation of Security Council resolution regarding establishment of responsibility for destruction of Pan American flight 103 and UTA flight 772.

+ Secretaries-General of United Nations and NATO to meet in Geneva on 1 September to discuss prospects for Bosnia and Herzegovina peace settlement and NATO support for peace-keeping operation in former Yugoslavia.

+ Secretary-General expresses concern at 21 August incident in which UNRWA medical personnel were wounded by Israeli gunfire in Gaza strip; Special Representative Gharekhan protests to Israeli Permanent Representative to United Nations.

+ Secretary-General's representative says NGO Palestine Meeting demonstrates United Nations' concern at stalemate in Middle East conflict; PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, in message to Meeting, calls for direct dialogue between PLO and Israel.

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With barely enough cash to cover the United Nations' regular budget and peace-keeping requirements until the end of the first week of September, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told the Fifth Committee today that he had to take measures to cut the Organization's expenditures.

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For information media—not an official record

To achieve savings in the cost of servicing conferences and producing documents and records, the Secretary-General said that the number of meetings with services was to be limited, in Geneva and Vienna as well as in New York. The number of temporary assistance staff during the General Assembly could be cut by over 25 per cent, or 100 appointments. In some cases, summary records would be provided instead of verbatim records, and the distribution of different language versions would be altered.

The Secretary-General went on to say that except in the case of emergencies, Security Council meetings would not be provided with full services after 6 p.m. or on weekends. Similar restrictions would apply to the General Assembly, except during the general debate. The hiring of consultants and official travel by staff members would also be curtailed.

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Dante Caputo, the Special Envoy of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) for Haiti, today congratulated the Haitian people and Parliament on the completion of the ratification of Robert Malval as the country's new Prime Minister. Mr. Caputo described the ratification as an essential step in the restoration of democracy.

Mr. Caputo said that on learning that the ratification had been completed, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had immediately begun the procedure of recommending to the Security Council that sanctions imposed on Haiti by resolution 841 (1993) in June be suspended.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met yesterday with an envoy of the Libyan Government to discuss ways and means of implementing Security Council resolution 731 (1992), according to a United Nations spokesman. That resolution urged the Libyan Government to respond fully and effectively to requests for cooperation in establishing responsibility for the destruction of Pan American flight 103 and UTA flight 772.

The Secretary-General will maintain contact with Libyan officials and will meet with the envoy again in the coming days, the spokesman said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will meet with the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Manfred Wörner, in Geneva on 1 September. A United Nations spokesman said the meeting -- the second between the two Secretaries-General -- should be seen in the context of the increasingly close cooperation between NATO and the United Nations.

The meeting will focus on the prospects for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina resulting from the Geneva negotiations and

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on NATO's role in support of the United Nations' peace-keeping role in the former Yugoslavia, according to the spokesman. The Secretaries-General will also discuss the development of closer links between NATO and the United Nations following the decision in that respect taken at a meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in Athens last June.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed concern regarding an incident in which medical staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were wounded by Israeli gunfire in the Gaza strip on 21 August. According to a United Nations spokesman, a border policeman fired rubber bullets at a clearly marked UNRWA ambulance which was surrounded by five medical personnel, all of whom were wearing white uniforms. The UNRWA office in Gaza strongly protested the incident to the civil administration.

The Secretary-General's Special Representative Chinmaya Rajaninath Gharekhan this morning protested the incident to Israel's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and requested that it be investigated. The Permanent Representative said his Government would look into the matter and would issue an early reply.

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International non-governmental groups can make a major contribution to the Middle East peace talks by supporting a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestine question, a representative of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told the Tenth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine yesterday. Johan Nordenfelt, Director of United Nations programmes against apartheid and for Palestinian rights, said the meeting demonstrated the Organization's concern at the stalemate in the longstanding conflict.

The three-day meeting, organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, aims to heighten awareness of the situation in the occupied territories in order to promote implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

In a message to the Meeting, Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), called for a direct dialogue between the PLO and Israel and a resumption of dialogue between the PLO and the United States Administration.

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